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MINISTER PRENTICE ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENTS TO YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT BOARD

2-2888

OTTAWA (May 28, 2007) - The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced three reappointments and one new appointment to the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Board (YESAB). Ms. Tara Christie, Mr. David Keenan, and Mr. Stephen Mills have been reappointed to the board. Mr. Simon Mason-Wood has been appointed to the board as a new member. Mr. Mills and Mr. Mason-Wood have also been appointed to the executive committee.

"We welcome these new and returning members to the board and look forward to their continued contributions," said Minister Prentice. "Moving forward with these appointments today reaffirms my commitment to increasing timeliness and predictability in the regulatory system and enables the work of the board to continue uninterrupted."

YESAB is responsible for administering an assessment process for regional projects that may generate environmental, social or economic impacts. YESAB is an independent organization with the mandate to implement the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, a requirement of the Umbrella Final Agreement and Yukon First Nations' Final Agreements.

Created in 2004, YESAB has seven board members and delivers assessment processes through its designated offices, its executive committee and panels of the board. The executive committee of the board is composed of the chair and two board members and is tasked with specific administrative and assessment responsibilities under the Act.

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Biographical Note - Tara Christie

Biographical Note - David Keenan

Biographical Note - Simon Mason-Wood

Biographical Note - Stephen J. Mills

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Biographical Note - Tara Christie

Ms. Tara Christie is a longtime resident of the Yukon and has lived and worked in the region for more than 20 years. A geological, geochemical, environmental and mining-issues consultant, she is an active partner in Gimlex Gold Mines, a family-owned placer mining business. Ms. Christie has served as a board member of the Yukon Chamber of Mines and of the BC and Yukon Chamber of Mines.

A past-president of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association, Ms. Christie holds a Masters Degree in geological engineering from the University of British Columbia.

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Biographical Note - David Keenan

Born and raised in the Yukon, Mr. David Keenan is a community-based consultant with experience in the Yukon's placer mining and quartz mining industries. He was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Yukon Territory and served as Minister of Community and Transportation Services and Minister of Tourism.

Mr. Keenan has served as Vice Chief and Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations (formerly Council for Yukon Indians) and has also served as Chief of the Teslin Tlingit Council. He is currently a councillor for the Teslin Tlingit Council and a member of the Yukon Territory Water Board.

Mr. Keenan was a negotiator for the Teslin Tlingit Council's Final Land Claim and Self Government Agreements and participated in the process that culminated in the Umbrella Final Agreement.

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Biographical Note - Simon Mason-Wood

Mr. Simon Mason-Wood was born in the Yukon Territory and is a member of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation in Mayo, Yukon. The early years of his career were spent in the public sector, where he worked with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for about 10 years. Following his work in the federal government, he worked in the private sector, as owner of three businesses in the Yukon from 1973 to 1998. For more than 20 years, Mr. Mason-Wood also served as justice of the peace in the Yukon.

Mr. Mason-Wood continues to invest his time and resources in the service of Yukon residents. Since 1969, he has served as coroner in the Yukon Territory and since 1991 he has been a marriage commissioner.

Mr. Mason-Wood served as a member of the Placer Mining Task Force (1985) and as chairman of the Yukon Foundation (1991 to 2002). Today he serves as executive director at the Yukon Foundation, an organization that provides funding for projects and scholarships.

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Biographical Note - Stephen J. Mills

Mr. Stephen Mills served as chief negotiator for the Council of Yukon First Nations in the development of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*.

With an educational background in business administration, mediation and dispute resolution, Mr. Mills has negotiated financial agreements related to First Nation land claims and self-government in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Mills is president of the Vuntut Development Corporation, chair of the Yukon Surface Rights Board and a senior official for the Gwich'in Council International. He has also served as chair of the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat.

Mr. Mills is a member of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and is a past member of the Yukon Territory Water Board, Yukon Utilities Board and the Mackenzie River Basin Board.

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